

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for prioritizing user application preferences based on user input data ~~controlling modifications to user choice settings~~, the method comprising:

recognizing user input data relevant to an application as a user choice setting associated with the application, wherein the user choice setting determines at least one property of execution of at least one event of the application;

~~[[(a)] storing [[a]] the user choice setting as a protected value that is secured by an access control indicator, the user choice setting determining an application's operation in a user's computing device, the application's operation including handling a particular event in the user's computing device;~~

securing the user choice setting using an access control indicator, wherein the access control indicator prohibits applications from modifying the user choice setting associated with the application;

receiving a request from the application to modify the user choice setting associated with the application;

[[(b)] in response to receiving a request from the application to modify the user choice setting associated with the application, generating an approval user interface requesting authorization of the modification from the user to modify the user choice setting;

receiving input from the user to determine a desired user choice setting associated with the application;[[and]]

modifying the user choice setting in accordance with the desired user choice setting; and

restoring the access control indicator to prohibit applications from modifying the user choice setting associated with the application.

wherein each step is executed on a computing device of the user.

~~(e) in response to receiving an input from a user authorizing the application to modify the user choice setting on the user's behalf:~~

~~(i) modifying the access control indicator to permit writing to the protected value;~~

~~(ii) modifying the user choice setting by writing a modified user choice setting to the protected value; and~~

~~(iii) restoring the access control indicator to prevent writing to the protected value.~~

2. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein the computing device of the user~~-user's computing device~~ has an operating system with a registry and wherein the protected value is a registry key stored in the registry and the access control indicator is an access control list (ACL) that has been initialized to prevent writing to the protected value and requires a user to modify the access control indicator to permit writing to the protected value.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 2, wherein the operating system also has a security subsystem and wherein modifying the access control indicator to permit writing to the protected value includes providing to the user rights to modify the ACL in accordance with the security subsystem of the operating system.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 3, wherein modifying the access control indicator to permit writing to the protected value includes providing to the user ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures, wherein ownership of the registry key automatically provides to the user rights to modify the ACL in accordance with the security subsystem of the operating system.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 4, wherein modifying the access control indicator to permit writing to the protected value includes allowing the user to temporarily take ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures ~~after receiving the input from the user authorizing the application to modify the user choice setting on the user's behalf.~~

6. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 3, wherein restoring the access control indicator to ~~prevent writing to the protected value~~ prohibit the application from modifying the user choice setting associated with the application includes requiring a user to modify the access control indicator to permit writing to the protected value ~~removing user rights to modify the ACL in accordance with the security subsystem of the operating system.~~

7. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 6, wherein requiring a user to modify the access control indicator to permit writing to the protected value removing user rights to modify the ACL includes returning ownership of the registry key that the ACL secures to the operating system when the access control indicator is unmodified by the user.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1 , further comprising:
generating a user choice setting user interface[[(UI)]];
displaying the current user choice setting ~~on the UI~~ on the user interface
along with other options for the user choice setting; and
receiving the authorizing input from the ~~the UI~~ user interface, along with a further input indicating a modified user choice setting including at least one of the other displayed options for the user choice setting.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, further comprising generating a change notification to the user ~~whenever~~ when the user choice setting has been modified, the change notification identifying the application that modified the user setting and the contents of the protected value before and after the modification.

10. (Original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the user choice settings include at least one of a user preference relating to a file association, an autoplay setting, contents of a start menu, a registered client setting, a protocol handler, a MIME type handler, a task association, a Web browser home page, a reset Web page setting, and a sidebar setting.

11. (Original) The method of Claim 10, wherein the registered client setting includes at least one of a Web browser, e-mail, media player, instant messaging, and virtual machine for Java setting.

12. (Currently Amended) A system for ~~communicating user choice settings between an application and a registry~~ for storing the user choice settings in a data repository to prevent undesired modifications to the user choice settings, the system comprising:

(a) ~~—a registry for storing a user choice setting associated with a first application as a protected value in a registry key, wherein the user choice setting determines at least one property of execution of at least one event of the first application determining an application's operation in a user's computing device, the application's operation including handling a particular event in the user's computing device;~~

(b) ~~—an access control list (ACL) for securing (ACL) to secure the registry key, wherein the ACL prevents the first application or another application from modifying the user choice setting associated with the first application; and~~

(c) ~~—an interface to control modifications to the user choice settings; and, wherein the interface generates an approval user interface on a computing device of the user in response to receiving a request from the first application or another application to modify the user choice setting; and,~~

(i) ~~—in response to the interface receiving a request from the application to modify the user choice setting on the user's behalf, requesting an authorization from a user to modify the user choice setting; and~~

- (ii) ~~in response to receiving the authorization from the user,~~
- (1) ~~modifying the ACL to permit writing to the~~
~~protected value in the registry key;~~
- (2) ~~writing to the protected value the modified user~~
~~choice setting; and~~
- (3) ~~restoring the ACL to prevent writing to the~~
~~protected value in the registry key, after writing the modified user~~
~~choice setting.~~

13. (Original) The system of Claim 12, the interface further notifying the user whenever the interface writes to the protected value, including notifying the user of a content of the protected value before and after the interface writes to the protected value and further notifying the user which application requested the modification.

14. (Original) The system of Claim 12, wherein the user choice setting is at least one of a user preference relating to a file association, an autoplay setting, contents of a start menu, a registered client setting, a protocol handler, a MIME type handler, a task association, a Web browser home page, a reset Web page setting, and a sidebar setting.

15. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim 14, wherein the registered client setting includes at least one of a Web browser, e-mail, media player, instant messaging, [[arid]]and virtual machine for Java setting.

16. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim 12, wherein the ~~user's~~ computing device of the user includes an operating system having a security subsystem and wherein modifying the ACL to ~~permit writing to the protected value in the registry key~~ prohibit the first application or another application from modifying the user choice setting associated with the first application includes providing to the user rights to modify the ACL in accordance with the security subsystem of the operating system.

17. (Currently Amended) The system, of Claim 12, wherein modifying the ~~[[ACT,]]ACL~~ to permit writing to the protected value in the registry key includes providing to the user ownership of the registry key, wherein ownership of the registry key automatically provides to the user rights to modify the ACL, in accordance with the security subsystem of the operating system.

18. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim 12, wherein modifying the ACL to permit writing to the protected value in the registry key includes allowing the user to temporarily take ownership of the registry key ~~after receiving the user approval authorizing the application to modify the user choice setting on the user's behalf.~~

19. (Currently Amended) A computer-accessible medium having components for safely modifying ~~a user's preferences~~ user application preferences for when and how an application is to operate ~~on the user's computer~~ a computer of a user, the comprising instructions to the instructions comprising:

recognize user input data relevant to an application as a user choice setting, wherein the user choice setting determines at least one property of execution of at least one event of the application;

(a) —store [[a]]the user choice setting as a protected value—that is secured by an access control indicator, the user choice setting determining all application's operation in a user's computing device, the application's operation including handling a particular event in the user's computing device;

secure the user choice setting using an access control indicator, wherein the access control indicator prohibits the application from modifying the user choice setting;

receive a request from the application to modify the user choice setting;

(b) —in response to a request from the application to modify the user choice setting, generate an approval user interface—request requesting authorization of the modification from the user to modify the user choice setting; and

receive input from the application to determine a desired user choice setting;

modify the user choice setting in accordance with the desired user choice setting; and

restore the access control indicator to prohibit the user from modifying the user choice setting,

wherein each step is executed on a computing device of the user.

(c) —in response to receiving all input from a user authorizing the application to modify the user choice setting on the user's behalf;

(i) —unlock the protected value to permit writing to the protected value;

- (ii) ~~modify the user choice setting by writing a modified user choice setting to the unlocked protected value; and~~
- (iii) ~~lock the protected value to prevent writing to the protected value.~~

20. (Currently Amended) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 19, wherein the user's computing device of the user includes an operating system having a registry and wherein the protected value is a registry key stored in the registry[[of]] and the instruction to modify the user choice setting in accordance with the desired user choice setting-unlock the protected value to permit writing to the protected value-includes an instruction to modify an access control list (ACL) that has been initialized to prevent writing to the protected value and require a user to modify the access control indicator to permit writing to the protected value.

21. (Previously Presented) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 20, wherein the operating system also has a security subsystem and wherein the instruction to modify the ACL to permit writing to the protected value includes an instruction to provide to the user rights to modify the ACL in accordance with the security subsystem of the operating system.

22. (Currently Amended) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 20, wherein the instruction to modify the ACL[[.]] to permit writing to the protected value includes an instruction to provide to the user ownership of the registry key that the ACL[[.]] secures, wherein ownership of the registry key automatically provides to the user rights to modify the ACL in accordance with the security subsystem of the operating system.

23. (Currently Amended) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 20, wherein the instruction to modify the ACL[[.]] to permit writing to the protected value includes an instruction to allow the user to temporarily take ownership of the registry key that the ACL[[.]] secures ~~after receiving the input from the user authorizing the application to modify the user choice setting on the user's behalf.~~

24. (Currently Amended) The computer-accessible medium or Claim 20, wherein the instruction to lock the ACL to prevent writing to the protected value includes an instruction to require a user to modify the access control indicator to permit writing to the protected value ~~remove user rights to modify the ACL~~ in accordance with the security subsystem of the operating system.

25. (Currently Amended) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 24, wherein the instruction to require a user to modify the access control indicator to permit writing to the protected value ~~remove user rights to modify the ACL~~, includes an instruction to return ownership [[to]]of the registry key that the ACL[[.]] secures to the operating system.

26. (Currently Amended) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 19, further comprising instructions to:

generate a user choice setting user interface[[(UI)];

display the current user choice setting on the [[UI]]user interface along with other options for the user choice setting; and

receive the authorization of the modification ~~authorizing input~~ from [[a]]the user via the [[UI]]user interface along with a ~~further~~ an input indicating a

selection of a modified user choice setting including a selection of at least one of the other displayed options for the user choice setting.

27. (Currently Amended) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 19, further comprising instructions to generate a change notification to the user whenever the user choice setting has been modified, the change notification identifying the application that modified the user setting and the contents of the protected value before and ~~[[alter]]~~after the modification.

28. (Original) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 19, wherein the user choice settings include at least one of a user preference relating to a file association, an autoplay setting, contents of a start menu, a registered client setting, a protocol handler, a MME type handler, a task association, a Web browser home page, a reset Web page setting, and a sidebar setting.

29. (Currently Amended) The computer-accessible medium of Claim 28, wherein the registered client setting includes at least one of a Web browser, e-mail, media player, instant messaging, ~~[[aid]]~~and virtual machine for Java setting.